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SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR RUSSIAN ASSISTANCE IN STRENGTHENING
INTERNATIONAL FORENSICS COOPERATION

REF: CURRY-KLEPP E-MAIL DATED MAY 29 2009 WITH AN
INVITATION TO THE FORENSICS MEETING

¶1. (U) This is an action request for Embassy Moscow. Please
see paragraph 4.

¶2. (SBU) BACKGROUND: Experts from the United States,
European Union, and the IAEA have developed a proposed
nuclear forensics framework to strengthen international
cooperation to end nuclear smuggling. While forensics
cooperation is desired in a number of areas (e.g.,
safeguards, attribution), opportunities to advance
international collaboration are probably greatest in
combating nuclear smuggling - a largely trans-national,
criminal phenomenon involving non-state actors. While
governments have had some success seizing smuggled nuclear
material, rarely are the sources of these materials ever
effectively investigated or prosecuted. Forensics
cooperation can produce investigative leads to link a seizure
by one country with a diversion in another to successfully
prosecute the people involved.

¶3. (SBU) The forensics framework would provide a basis for
cooperation on smuggling that has been either lacking or ad
hoc and would establish elements needed for forensics
cooperation in other areas. The framework includes a system
of national nuclear forensics libraries and a directory of
national points of contact. Together, these will allow law
enforcement officials to contact atomic energy experts in
neighboring countries to determine if seized material was
diverted from one of their facilities. The libraries will
include a range of data (e.g., isotopic composition, chemical
form) relevant to identifying nuclear material although
exchanging material is optional and at the discretion of each
individual government. On June 29, the IAEA will host
forensics experts from more than 35 countries, including
Russia, to initiate a technical review of the framework
(reftel). Mr. V. Erastov and Mr. V. Ostropikov from Rosatom
have been invited as has Ms. E. Kuteynikov from Bochvar. In
2006, at Umea, Sweden, Mr.

Erastov briefed the International Technical Working Group on
Nuclear Smuggling (ITWG), which is co-sponsoring the meeting
on June 29, regarding Russian efforts.

¶4. (SBU) ACTION REQUEST: Drawing from the background above,
the Department requests that post inform the GOR that during
the June 16-17 plenary of the Global Initiative to Combat
Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), the United States will brief
international partners on the concept of national nuclear
forensics libraries and encourage Russia's participation in

the June 29th technical review. Post should invite the GOR to share its experiences with forensic databases at the June 29th meeting and suggest the GOR join the United States in encouraging additional governments to participate in the meeting. Post may want to emphasize that the library concept is simply a framework for strengthening cooperation and does not obligate governments to share material. Additionally, the Department requests that post pass the non-paper (para 6) to the highest appropriate Russian officials and gauge GOR interest in the national libraries concept and nuclear forensics cooperation in general.

15. (SBU) REPORTING DEADLINE: Department Requests that post respond via front-channel cable no later than June 10, 2009.

16. (SBU) BEGIN TEXT OF NON-PAPER.

Framework for Nuclear Forensic Cooperation

Trafficking of nuclear material is one of the more likely pathways for terrorists to acquire material needed for an improvised nuclear device. While the frequency of known incidents involving weapons-grade material and quantities of seized material have generally declined since the mid-1990s, smuggling of these dangerous materials continues. Governments have shown some success seizing smuggled material, but rarely are these incidents, particularly diversions, effectively investigated or prosecuted.

To support cooperation between governments, international experts envision a framework of national nuclear forensic libraries and a directory listing national points of contact.

The libraries would contain forensically significant information on nuclear and radiological material manufactured by or on the territory of a particular country. This framework would allow law enforcement officials to contact atomic energy experts in neighboring countries to determine if smuggled material was diverted from one of their facilities. Governments would be encouraged to develop procedures for making and responding to queries, but cooperation would be at the discretion of each individual government.

On June 29, 2009, the IAEA will host forensics experts from more than 35 countries, including from Rosatom, to discuss the proposed framework, and over the next twelve months, the United States also will facilitate this technical review among interested Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) partners. At the June 16-17 plenary of the GICNT, the United States will discuss the proposed framework and encourage participation in the technical review.

Russia's advanced forensic capabilities, experience with forensic databases, knowledge of the nuclear fuel cycle, and co-chairmanship of the GICNT, give it a unique position to assist in this effort. As the co-chair of the International Technical Working Group on Nuclear Smuggling, which is helping IAEA organize the meeting on June 29, the United States would welcome a presentation by the Russian Federation on its experience on nuclear forensics databases.

The United States and Russia Federation have unique capabilities to address nuclear terrorism threats. We hope that Russia will favorably consider the invitation to participate in the technical review of the national nuclear forensics library proposal and share its experience in this area.

END TEXT OF NON-PAPER.

17. Washington appreciates Post's assistance. Contact Michael Curry (currymr@state.gov, 202-736-7692) in ISN/WMDT for more information on the details.
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